

Soldiers

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ALL
SPORTS
Issue



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Brandon Sanderfur rains blows on Groover Gebhart at the third annual Army Combatives Invitational.

— Photo by Mitchell Thomas IV

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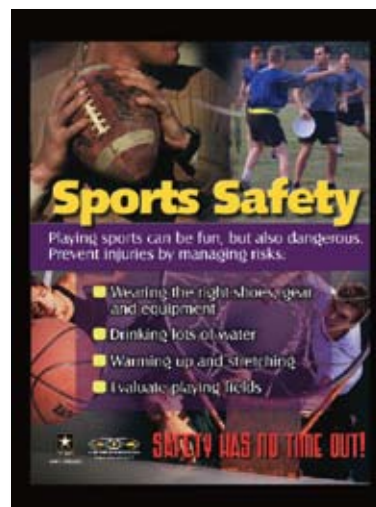
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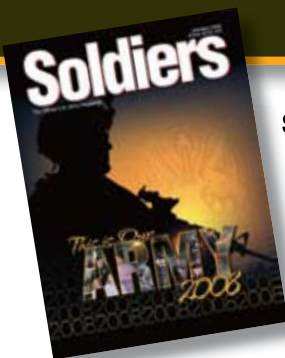


SOLDIERS MEDIA CENTER

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Soldiers

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NAGC Blue Pencil
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2004



Thomas Jefferson Awards
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2005
Beth Ann Reece

MAILCALL



GI Jill

I JUST finished your December article on Sgt. Jill Stevens, and I found it to be both refreshing and enjoyable.

Stevens is obviously not a brainless Barbie doll, and her thoughtful and initially hesitant reaction to being asked to compete in beauty contests shows that she understands the pitfalls that can be associated with such competitions.

I'm sure the article will draw negative mail from the "political-correctness police," who'll blather on about women debasing themselves in beauty pageants or arguing that Soldiers (whether active or reserve component) have no right to decide what they will or will not do in their private lives.

As a woman (and former Soldier) who has seen more harassment from other female Soldiers than I ever endured from males, I applaud Sgt. Stevens for her courage to follow her own path, for her service to her country, for being a positive role model for women who want to think for themselves, and for her commitment to the Army and its values.

G. Rolle
via e-mail

AS a career Soldier, I am most displeased with your cover featuring Sgt. Jill Stevens.

I find it offensive that you would show a Soldier in uniform with "beauty-pageant" paraphernalia. I also fault Stevens and her chain of command for allowing her to be photographed in such a demeaning manner.

For a soldier to be in a beauty pageant is very unprofessional, to say the least. A Soldier is a professional warrior and not a play actress!

I served six years in the National Guard and I am displeased her Guard unit would even allow her to compete. I expect better from your magazine in the future!

Sgt. David Tucker
Fort Sill, Okla.

ACTUALLY, the majority of the mail we've received regarding the article on Sgt. Stevens has been overwhelmingly positive. Most writers — both mail and female — have applauded her for emphasizing positive roles for women both in the military and civilian life, and many remarked on her obvious intelligence, compassion and genuine concern for others. While Stevens' decision to compete in the Miss Utah and, ultimately, Miss America events may not please some people, that decision is her right as an American.

Rainier Rescuers

I REALLY enjoyed the December article on the Army Reserve Chinooks that undertake high-altitude rescues on Mount Rainier.

As a Soldier based at Fort Lewis and someone who really enjoys Washington state's high country, it's nice to know that there are skilled Army aviators willing to risk their lives to save others.

Sgt. John Alley
via e-mail

Doggie Eyewear

A LETTER in your December issue asked if a military working dog pictured in the November **Soldiers** was actually wearing protective goggles.

As a deployed bomb dog handler in Iraq, I can answer the question: Yes, "doggles" (as they're widely known) are used to protect the dogs' eyes from sand and other irritants. So, yes, they are official.

The only problem is that not too many of the dogs like them very much. Try putting a pair of these things on a 125-pound Shepherd that doesn't want to look fashionable!

Name withheld by request
via e-mail

Credit Correction

I JUST wanted to let you know that the photo credit for the On Point photo on page 19 was actually taken by Spc. Morrene E. Randell of the 204th Public Affairs Detachment in Orlando, Fla.

Staff Sgt. Rael A. Tirado
via e-mail

Pushing Out Poppies

I enjoyed the excellent November article "Pushing out Afghan Poppies."

First Lt. Babcock and Capt. Gilmore are doing wonders helping the Afghan people understand that there are alternatives to growing poppies. Their legacy will endure for years to come.

Maj. Rob Fraser
via e-mail

Soldiers Values Your Opinion

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Iraq

Pilots from the 101st Airborne Division — attached to 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Inf. Div. — do pre-flight checks before a medical-evacuation mission at Forward Operating Base Normandy, Iraq. — Photo by Spc. Shawn M. Cassatt



► Iraq

Sgt. Carrie Coble examines an Iraqi woman's eyes in Hateen, Iraq. — Photo by Airman 1st Class Stephanie Longoria, USAF

▼ Iraq

CH-47 Chinook helicopters land outside the village of Abd al Hasan to take U.S. and Iraqi troops back to Forward Operating Base McHenry after the completion of their part in a combat operation. — Photo by Staff Sgt. Dallas Edwards, USAF





▲ Iraq

Chaplain (Capt.) John Barkemeyer conducts mass for Soldiers on a remote contingency operating base in Ramadi. — Photo by Spc. Kieran Cuddihy



▲ Iraq

Two Soldiers from Brigade Support Troop Battalion, Headquarters Company, 3rd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div., relax before departing on a mission from Forward Operating Base Hammer. — Photo by Staff Sgt. Shawn Weismiller, USAF



▲ Bangladesh

Soldiers attached to an Army medical team from Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii, sit among food, bottled water and medical supplies in a Navy CH-53E Sea Stallion helicopter as they wait to fly to Patuakhali on a humanitarian-relief mission following tropical cyclone Sidr. — Photo by Cpl. Peter R. Miller, USMC



Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey A. Wolfe, USAF

U.S. armed forces athletes march in formation during the opening ceremony of the fourth CISM World Games, held in October 2007 in Hyderabad, India.



Tim Hipps (both)

Staff Sgt. Andrew Shepherd, a member of the Army's World Class Athlete Program, delivers a left jab while loading an overhand right during a heavy-weight title bout against Germany's Erken Teper. Shepherd won the gold medal in the event.

MORE than 150 U.S. military athletes experienced a week of "friendship through sport" with peers from 101 nations at the fourth Conseil International du Sport Militaire Military World Games recently in Hyderabad and Mumbai, India.

CISM hosts military world championships in more than 20 sports every year, but its premier event is the Military World Games. The 2007 Military World Games was the largest sporting event in India's history, CISM officials said.

Tim Hipps works at the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command Public Affairs Office.

Military World

▲ Army Capt. Randeel Farrell and North Korea's Son Hui Kil compete for the ball in front of the U.S. goal during a preliminary soccer match at the CISM World Games.

CISM president Italian Brig. Gen. Gianni Gola said the best military athletes in the world gather to compete, but also to develop friendship through sport. "The ultimate goal is peace," he said.

The four-hour opening ceremony, a celebration of Indian culture, resembled opening night at the Olympics, complete with military pomp and circumstance, attendees said.

India's President Shrimati Patil, the first woman to serve as supreme commander of the Indian armed forces, officially opened the Games.

In competition, Army World Class Athlete Program boxers and Army Golden Knights skydivers won seven of Team USA's 10 medals. Heavyweight boxer Staff Sgt. Andrew Shepherd and the women's formation skydiving team won gold medals. The Americans earned additional medals in swimming, triathlon, and track and field.

The U.S. armed forces men's and women's parachuting teams combined to win three medals in record-setting fashion.

Sgts. 1st Class Elisa Tennyson, Angela Nichols and Karen Morrison teamed with Staff Sgt. Norma Estrella and videographer Staff Sgt. Larry Miller to win gold in women's formation skydiving with an eight-round total of 171 points, followed by Norway (160) and France (137).

Along the way, the U.S. women established a CISM record by executing 26 freefall formations in 35 seconds, surpassing their previous mark of 25 set at the 2004 CISM World Military Parachuting Championships in Austria.



Tim Hipps

They also teamed with Air Force Lt. Col. Rhonda Reichel to win silver in the women's team overall event.

"This is the big one for us," said team leader Tennyson, who has completed more than 9,000 jumps since 1987. "For us, it's about winning CISM, the U.S. championships and the world championships. The CISM Military World Games is our Olympics, because parachuting is not an Olympic sport."

On the men's side, Army Golden Knights Sgts. 1st Class Brian Krause, Kurt Isenbarger, Matthew Davidson and John Hoover, and Staff Sgt. Larry Miller won a silver medal in formation skydiving. They, too, set a CISM record with 33 formations, that competitors from Belgium later eclipsed.

Army WCAP Capt. Philip Johnston's fifth-place finish in the 96-kilogram division highlighted the U.S. Greco-Roman wrestling team's two-day tournament.

Meantime, the U.S. women's soccer team rebounded from a 4-0 loss to

▲ WCAP wrestler Capt. Philip Johnston (left) grapples with Slovakia's Roman Meduna in the 96-kilogram division of the Greco-Roman wrestling tournament.

North Korea and a 1-0 loss to Germany to finish fifth in the Military World Games tournament with a 3-0 victory over Canada.

"It's so neat to get to meet other people from other countries," said Air Force Capt. Stacie Bortz. "We not only have a common bond because of our military service, but because of our love of sports. We're all here with a purpose: to represent our country and meet new people who do what we do."

The U.S. delegation consisted of 54 Army, 38 Air Force, 30 Navy, eight Marine Corps and two Coast Guard personnel, and 36 civilians serving as coaches, technical representatives, trainers and other support personnel. ■

Games

Story by Tim Hipps



Focusing on th



he Olympics

Story and Photos by Tim Hipps



FOR several Soldier-athletes and coaches, the long road to Beijing, China, for the 2008 Olympics began at the XV Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

From the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit's 10-medal haul to the Olympic-qualifying performance by 1st Lt. Mickey Kelly of the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, Soldiers were vital to Team USA's dominance of the 2007 Pan Am Games.

Kelly secured a berth in the Beijing Games with a third-place finish in the women's modern pentathlon.

"I can't believe I just did that," Kelly said after winning a bronze medal and earning an Olympic berth as the second North American finisher in the five-sport event at Deodoro Sports Complex. "I'm still in shock. You dream of it and you try to put everything in position so you can have that, and when it comes true, you're just ecstatic."

Brazil's Yane Marques won the gold medal with 5,484 points and Canada's Monique Pinette struck silver with 5,288 points. Kelly took the bronze with 5,252.

"It was the mission and I am so thankful for everyone who helped me along the way," said Kelly, who's stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., home of the U.S. Army WCAP.

Two-time Olympian Sgt. 1st Class Jason Parker

◀ 1st Lt. Mickey Kelly of the World Class Athlete Program (at right) joins two other medalists following their 1-2-3 finish in the women's modern pentathlon at the 2007 Pan American Games.

▶ Kelly raises her arms in triumph after crossing the finish line and securing an Olympic berth with her third-place finish in the women's modern pentathlon.



"I can't say enough about this Brazilian crowd," Downs said. "They're really passionate about their athletes. You've got to love it..."

won gold medals in the men's 10-meter air rifle and 50-meter three-position free-rifle events. In air rifle, Parker tallied a Pan Am Games record 695.9 points, eclipsing the 692.5 points set by Canada's Angel Valarte in 2003.

"We accomplished a lot this week and it feels good," said Parker, who's stationed at Fort Benning, Ga. "I still have a few things I need to work on, but by next spring and summer I should be ready to go for Beijing."

WCAP rower Capt. Matt Smith also knows the drill. After competing at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, Smith deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, where he helped stand up a tank battalion.

Smith rejoined WCAP last September to resume training in Princeton, N.J., for a shot at making Team USA for the Beijing Games. At the Pan Am Games, he teamed with

Andrew Bolton, Bjorn Larsen and Simon Carcagno to win a silver medal in the lightweight men's four event.

For Smith, there were challenges based on his two-year hiatus from the sport.

"This has been a tough year," he said. "My mind was saying 'Yeah, I'm in shape, I want to go.' But my body was saying 'I don't know if I'm ready for this yet.' I'm still continuing my upward trend and hopefully things will work out and we'll do well going into Beijing."

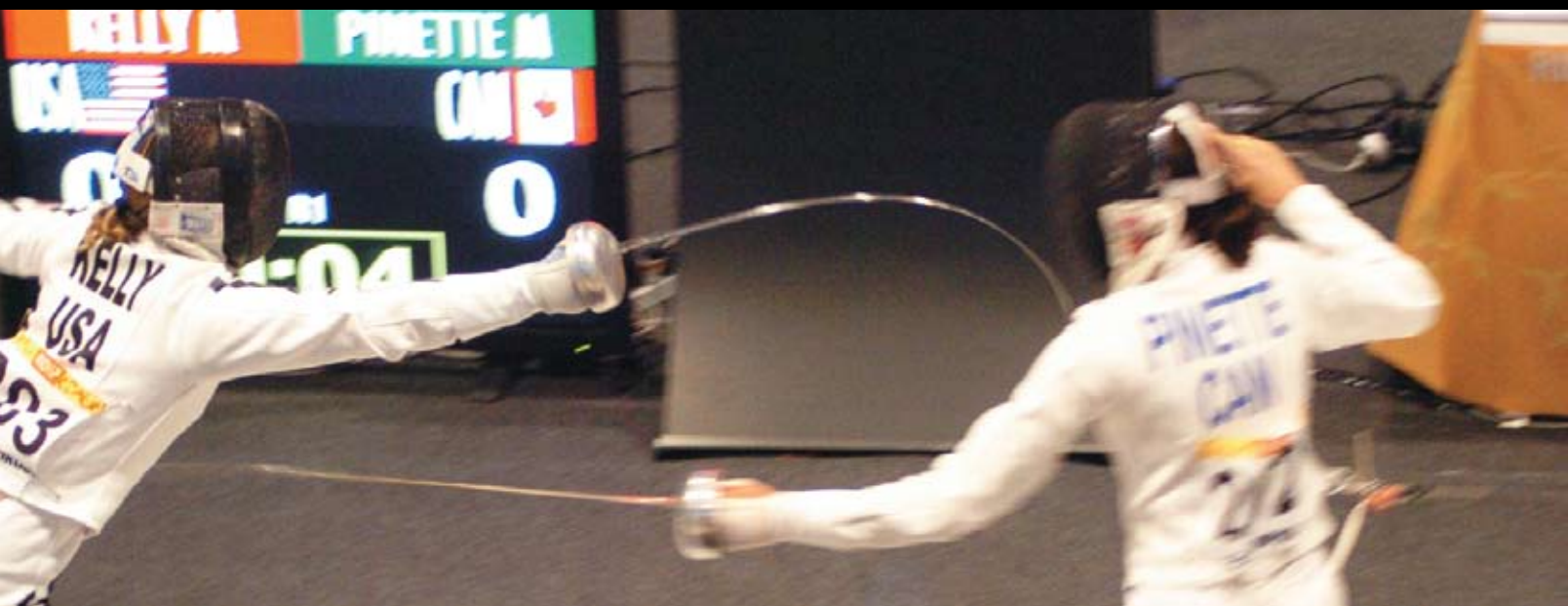
Smith also earned a trip to the 2007 World Rowing Championships in Moscow, where he finished 10th in the lightweight men's pair event.

WCAP wrestler Staff Sgt. Dremiel Byers, a 2002 world champion, earned a silver medal at the Pan Am Games, but was nevertheless disappointed.



▼ Two-time reigning U.S. national champion Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Downs throws a left jab at Cuba's Yuciel Napoles during their heavyweight semifinal bout. Downs lost the bout, but won the bronze medal.





▲ 1st Lt. Mickey Kelly scores against Canada's Monica Pinette in the fencing event of the modern pentathlon competition. Pinette ultimately took the silver medal in the pentathlon.

"In the big scheme of things, medaling is always good, but not for me," said Byers, who dropped a 1-1, 2-1 decision in the Greco-Roman 120-kilogram gold-medal match to arch-rival Mijail Lopez of Cuba. "There's a lesson to be learned in whatever happened, but I still think I was supposed to win this one and I dropped the ball. I'm going home with some hardware — it's just not what I came here for."

All-Army and Team USA Greco-Roman assistant coach Staff Sgt. Shon Lewis saw the setback as a step in the right direction for Byers, who quickly refocused on the 2007 World Wrestling Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan.

At the World Championships on Sept. 19 Byers was a major player in one of the biggest upsets in sports history by winning the heavyweight bronze medal match that secured Team USA's first Greco-Roman world team title.

"I'm really happy right now," Byers said. "We're walking away with something special — real special."

WCAP boxer Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Downs won a Pan Am Games bronze medal after dropping an 8-5 decision to Cuba's Yuciel Napoles in the semifinals of the 81-kilogram weight class.

Downs, who's stationed at Fort Carson, passed a top-notch test of the international boxing experience during

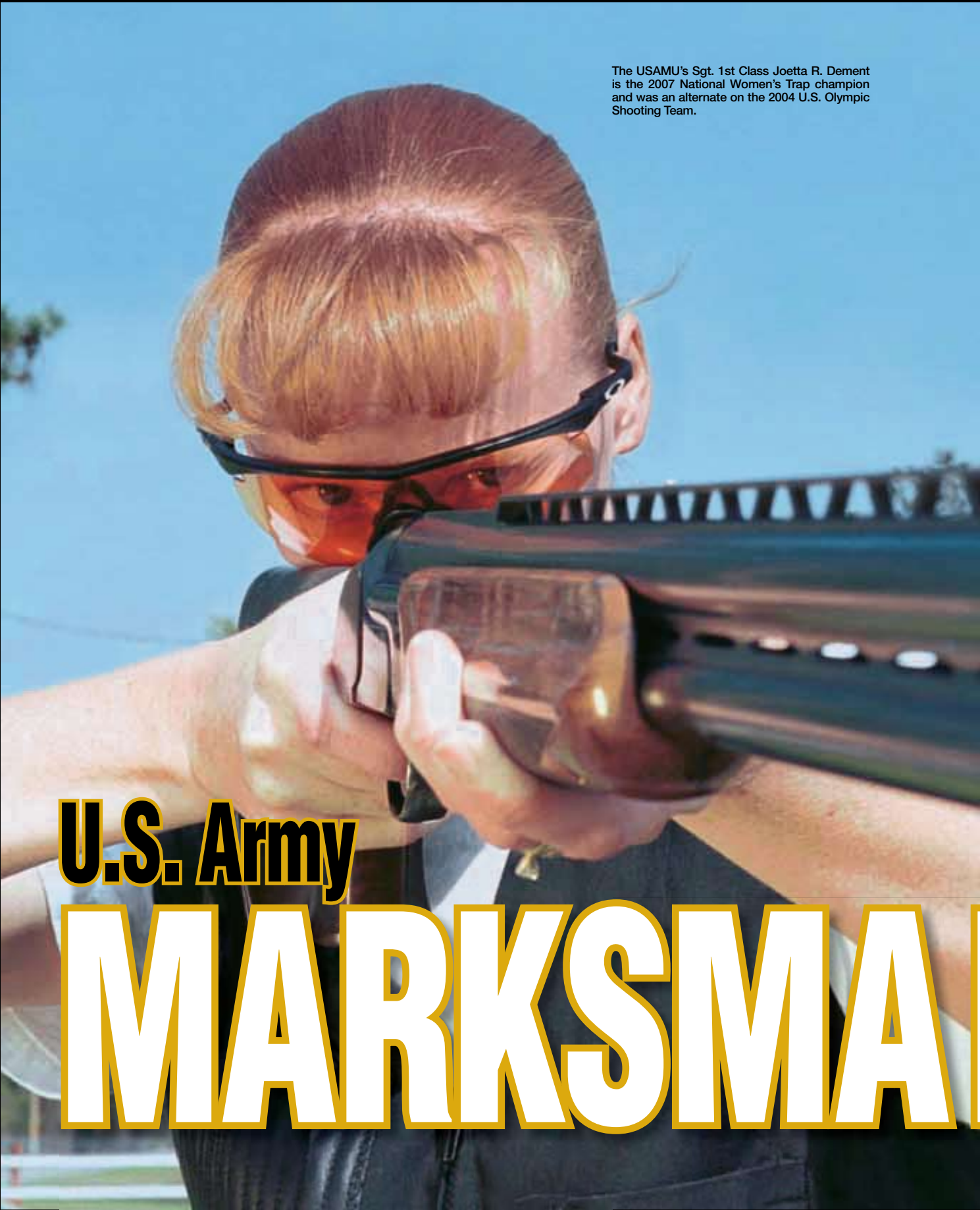
his 12-5 quarterfinal victory over Brazil's Washington Silva, who was backed by a raucous hometown crowd.

"I can't say enough about this Brazilian crowd," Downs said. "They're really passionate about their athletes. You've got to love it, and you have to love the challenge to persevere."

A month later, Downs won the light-heavyweight division at the 2008 U.S. Olympic Boxing Team Trials in Houston. He later was named co-captain of the U.S. Olympic boxing team. 🇺🇸

▼ And, in yet another modern pentathlon event, Kelly urges her horse, Tai Pan, over a jump during the equestrian competition.





The USAMU's Sgt. 1st Class Joetta R. Dement is the 2007 National Women's Trap champion and was an alternate on the 2004 U.S. Olympic Shooting Team.

U.S. Army

MARKSMAN

THE U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit is the only organization of its kind in the Army today. Formed in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the unit produces America's best competitive shooters and the Army's finest custom gunsmiths, AMU officials said.

The AMU trains Soldier-athletes to win competitions, promote the Army, and enhance combat readiness through research and development of weapons and ammunition. It comprises a support staff, a Custom



Firearms Shop and six competitive shooting sections: Service Rifle, Service Pistol, Action Shooting, International Rifle, International Pistol and Shotgun.

Service Rifle

The Service Rifle Team conducts the National Small Arms Firing School for the Department of Defense, and competes in interservice and national championship events.

Shooters compete with the modified M-16A2 rifle and 300 Winchester magnums with telescopic sights, and shoot at targets up to 1,000 yards away.

Paula J. Randall is the public affairs officer for the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, Accessions Support Brigade.

MARKSMANSHIP UNIT

Story by Paula J. Randall



▲ Action shooter Spc. Daniel J. Horner is the 2007 U.S. Practical Shooters Association national multi-gun tactical champion.

Service Pistol

The Service Pistol Team competes in the multi-national Conseil International du Sport Militaire tournament, interservice and national championships, and conducts the Small Arms Firing School at the national championships for the Department of Defense.

The team competes with the .22-caliber, center-fire and .45-caliber pistols, as well as the modified M-9 9mm weapon.

Action Shooting

The Action Shooting Team competes in state, area, national and world-championship events. Action shooters use stock or production pistols and unlimited or open pistols. The latter are custom built with additions such as scopes and compensators. Competitions consist of eight to 30 stages, with each stage varying in course design. The competitors are required to negotiate each stage as quickly and accurately as possible.

International Rifle

The International Rifle Team competes in interservice, national, international, world-level and Olympic competitions, and conducts the international portion of the Small-Arms Marksmanship Clinics during the national matches at Camp Perry, Va.

Male shooters compete in air rifle, free rifle, smallbore free rifle and standard rifle events, using various-caliber weapons at various-range targets and from varying positions. Female shooters compete in air rifle, standard rifle, three-position and prone events.

International Pistol

The International Pistol Team competes in interservice, national, international, world-level and Olympic events, and conducts CISM, Interservice and National Team Selection Matches.

Male shooters compete in free-pistol matches firing .22-caliber pistols at 50 meters; standard-pistol matches in which they shoot slow fire, timed fire and rapid fire with time limits; rapid-fire pistol matches using .22-caliber pistols at 25 meters; and air-pistol matches firing .177-caliber pistols at 10 meters.

Female shooters compete in air and sport pistol events, in which they shoot rapid fire and precision using .22-caliber pistols at 25 meters.

Shotgun

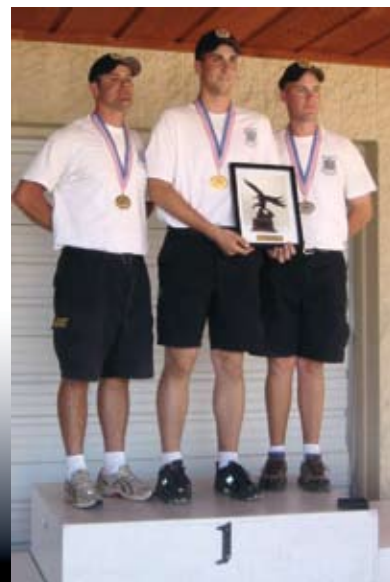
The world's top skeet, trap and double trap shooters make up the USAMU Shotgun Team, which competes in interservice, national, international and Olympic events. Using 12-gauge shotguns, shooters track, aim and shoot at clay targets moving at up to 65 mph.

Custom Firearms Shop

The Custom Firearms Shop produces top-quality, match-grade rifles, pistols and shotguns, and much of the AMU's ammunition. Shop personnel undertake weapons research and development, including testing the M-21 and M-24 sniper systems and special-reaction team rifles, and testing and maintaining the Barrett .50-caliber sniper rifle.

Recently, the shop accurized the M-16A2 rifle

➤ (Left to right) Staff Sgt. William H. Keever, Sgt. Joshua M. Richmond and Sgt. Richard Ryan Hadden swept the 2005 double-trap championships at the Olympic Training Center.



➤ Staff Sgt. Craig S. Nelson is one of many Soldiers who work as gunsmiths and machinists in the USAMU's Custom Firearms Shop.

and the M-9 pistol. The Army gunsmiths, machinists and ammunition technicians transformed the reliable combat weapons into match-winning equipment. The most recent achievement by the shop is the accurization of the Mk-12, which was used in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Soldiers and Civilians of the AMU Ammunitions Loading Section produce world-class match ammunition for the unit's shooters. They are responsible for the thousands of rounds produced each day, all of which are measured and adjusted to within one-tenth of a grain. The technicians produce ammunition for rifles and pistols and test each cartridge case, propellant, primer and bullet.

USAMU Accomplishments

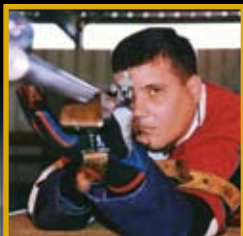
Since 1956 members of the AMU have won hundreds of individual and team national titles, including more than 40 world championships and 21 Olympic medals. The unit also usually provides one-half to three-quarters of the members of the U.S. Olympic Shooting Team.



"The Marksmanship Unit has gained worldwide recognition and respect for its shooting accomplishments," said Robert Aylward, the unit's deputy commander. "These accomplishments are why the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit is called the 'Home of Champions.'" 🇺🇸



Two-time Olympian Sgt. 1st Class Jason A. Parker trains with his Olympic free rifle at the Pool International Shooting Complex at Fort Benning, Ga.



Sgt. 1st Class Thomas A. Tamas:
2000 & 1992 Olympian;
Columbus, Ga.
Free Rifle Prone

Sgt. 1st Class Jason A. Parker:
2004 & 2000 Olympian
& former World Champion and
world-record setter;
Omaha, Neb.

Men's Air Rifle,
Three Position Free Rifle
and Free Rifle Prone



Sgt. 1st Class James Todd Graves:
2000 Olympic Bronze Medal-
ist and 2004, 1996 & 1992
Olympian;
Laurel, Miss.

Men's Skeet

Pfc. Walton Glenn Eller III:
2004 & 2000 Olympian;
Katy, Texas

Double Trap



Sgt. 1st Class Shawn C. Duloher:
2004 Olympian;
Lee's Summit, Mo.

Men's Skeet

Sgt. 1st Class Theresa E. DeWitt:
1996 Olympian;
Cincinnati, Ohio

Women's Trap



Maj. Michael E. Anti:
2004 Olympic Silver Medalist
and 2000 & 1992 Olympian;
Winterville, N.C.

Three Position Free Rifle
and Free Rifle Prone

Aiming at the Olympics

Story by Paula J. Randall

WITH the end of the 2007 Pan-American Games, many in the sports world turn their attention to the Summer Olympic Games, to be held in Beijing, China, in August.

Eight Soldiers of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit returned from the Athens Olympics in 2004 with memories, memorabilia and a medal. Between then and the recent Pan-Am Games, USAMU shooters, and thousands of other U.S. athletes in 29 Olympic sports, won Olympic Quota Slots to compete as representatives of the United States in the Beijing Olympics.

Since 1988 each national shooting federation has had to earn its slots. Athletes can obtain only one slot for their country in any event in the Olympics. It guarantees that someone from that country — not necessarily the athlete who earned the slot — can compete in the particular Olympic event. Each nation can earn a maximum of 28 slots in shooting.

The total number of athletes worldwide who may compete in the sport of shooting is 390. Competitors include a maximum of 243 men and 139 women in 15 events.

Thirty-two USAMU Soldiers are international shooters and are vying for a spot on the 2008 U.S. Olympic Shooting Team. They include 14 rifle shooters, 13 shotgunners and five pistol shooters.

Sgt. 1st Class Jason A. Parker and Sgt. 1st Class Daryl L. Szarenski both competed in their second Olympics in 2004.

"The Olympic competition gave me the confidence to shoot for good scores anywhere in the world," Parker said. "The highlight was making the Olympic finals, and the opening ceremony was a wonderful experience. All of the U.S. athletes were excited to walk into the stadium. Becoming an Olympian had been a dream of mine since I was a teenager, and the Army gave me everything I needed to attain my goal to be there. I couldn't be where I am today without the Army and the Army Marksmanship Unit.


Szarenski took 13th place in Air Pistol and 15th place in Free Pistol in 2004. He placed 25th in Free Pistol in the 2000 Olympics.

After his disappointing 2004 finish, Szarenski said: "It's better to compete and lose than to be afraid of losing and never trying." But now he's solely focused on winning the elusive Olympic gold medal.

The USAMU has 10 military athletes who are former Olympians — two of them are Olympic medalists. Three-time Olympian Maj. Michael E. Anti won the silver medal in Three-Position Free Rifle in 2004, finishing a mere 1.4 points behind the winner.

Anti, an infantry officer, also competed in the 1992 and 2000 Olympics. He is attached to the USAMU through the World Class Athlete Program.

Sgt. 1st Class James Todd Graves has competed in four Olympics, earning a bronze medal in the 2004 games.

Other USAMU Olympians include Sgt. 1st Class Shawn Duloher, two-time Olympian Sgt. 1st Class Thomas A. Tamas, Sgt. 1st Class Theresa E. DeWitt, Staff Sgt. William H. Keever and Lt. Col. Robert E. Harbison. 

Combatives Champions

Story and Photos by Mitchell Thomas IV

SINCE the 2000 founding of the U.S. Army Combatives School at Fort Benning, Ga., the teaching of combatives — an Army-unique system of unarmed combat — has spread Armywide. Indeed, so popular has the martial art become that Fort Benning recently hosted the third annual Army Combatives Invitational.

Teams from around the nation took to the mats as hundreds of spectators filled the stands at the Smith Fitness Center gymnasium to watch nearly 200 male and female Soldiers compete in gender-neutral combatives matches.

“We have more fighters than we’ve ever had,” said Matt Larson, director of the Army combatives program. “That’s especially impressive, considering that the ongoing surges of Soldiers to combat theaters means there are 30,000 fewer Soldiers who could participate.”

Each fighter represented a team from a specific unit or post, and fighters competed in seven weight classes.

Mitchell Thomas IV writes for the Fort Benning Bayonet.

Brandon Sanderfur rains down punches on Groover Gebhart during the lightweight finals. Sanderfur won after the referee stopped the fight due to strikes.



Kyle Baguio throws a side kick at Rudy Romero during the 3rd flyweight semifinals match. Romero won the match by submission.

The preliminary matches consisted of timed rounds limited to standard grappling techniques. Fighters who advanced to the semifinals fought using the intermediate fighting rules, which allow limited striking and open hand slaps and kicks.

“When you’re used to striking with a closed fist, you can get caught up in the moment,” said Guillermo Villa, who was disqualified from one of his matches after hitting an opponent with a closed fist. “You have to be really disciplined to abide by the different rules when you’re fighting.”

Villa, who traveled all the way from Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii, went on to win third place in the Cruiserweight division.

During the finals, fighters were allowed to use advanced rules. These incorporate the use of four-pound gloves and closed-fist strikes, kicks to the head and knee strikes to the body.

There were demonstrations between matches, in which Soldiers demonstrated how to successfully defend themselves during encounters involving weapons.

In the final match, Fort Bragg’s John Long defeated fellow Fort Bragg teammate Jefferey Yurk by submission, due to strikes.

“It feels good to finally win the gold,” said Long, who has competed for the last three years. “You always have mixed emotions when you fight a teammate, but when we win first and second, we win as a team.”

The Fort Bragg team also came in first place overall. 🏆

➤ Between matches there were several demonstrations in which Soldiers displayed combatives techniques in simulated combat scenarios like this one where two Soldiers fight for control of a taser gun.



And The Winners Are...

Flyweight: 125 LBS

1st place, James Tomko, Fort Bragg, N.C.
2nd place, Joshua Poblet, Guam National Guard
3rd place, Rudy Romero Fort Riley, Kan.

Lightweight: 140 LBS

1st place, Matthew Bray, Fort Riley.
2nd place, Dustin Portillo, Fort Campbell, Ky.
3rd place, Brandon Sanderfur, Fort Hood, Texas

Welterweight: 155 LBS

1st place, Jason Kwast, Fort Bragg
2nd place, Nathaniel Nelson, Fort Sill, Okla.
3rd place, Marcos Gutierrez, Fort Benning, Ga.

Middleweight: 170 LBS

1st place, Aaron Cooper, Fort Benning
2nd place, Yuriy Fomin III, National Guard
3rd place, Dale Wooden, Fort Bragg

Crusierweight: 185 LBS

1st place, Jacob South, Fort Knox, Ky.
2nd place, Gary Tate, Fort Campbell
3rd place, Guillermo Villa, Tripler Army Medical Center

Light Heavyweight: 205 LBS (below)

1st place, Tim Kennedy, Fort Bragg
2nd place, Carpaccio Owens, Fort Bragg
3rd place, Benjamin Bradley, Fort Gordon, Ga.

Heavyweight: 205 LBS

1st place, John Long, Fort Bragg
2nd place, Jeffery Yurk, Fort Bragg
3rd place, Darril Schoonover, Fort Hood

Winners by team:

1st place, Fort Bragg
2nd place, Fort Riley
3rd place, (tie) Fort Benning and Fort Campbell

Combatives at Kalsu

Story by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

TO help stay in peak physical condition, several Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq, are taking the fight to each other with tae kwon do, boxing and Army combatives.

Several times a week, in the morning and evening, martial arts-based classes are offered at the FOB Kalsu gym.

"There's something for everyone to learn," said Staff Sgt. Timothy Eye, a chaplain assistant in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Ga.

Eye, who has a martial-arts background in tae kwon do and kickboxing, said it was natural for him to want to continue his martial-arts training while deployed.

The Army combatives system has four levels, and since Eye is already certified in the first, he decided to continue training on the second level. To gain his certification, he had to perform 80 hours of training and learn various moves, escapes, grapples and throws.

Although finding time was often difficult, Eye said the instructors were very friendly, flexible and willing to work around Soldiers' schedules and missions.

Pfc. Logan Forbing, a member of the personal security detail for 2nd BCT commander Col. Terry Ferrell, also attended the Army combatives class, earning his level-one certification.

Forbing said he plans to continue his "fighting education" by pursuing a level-two certification.

"I really liked combatives; it is a more fun version of wrestling," he said. "Every Soldier should get at least level-one certified."

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky is assigned to the 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.



Sled Hockey Scores

Story by Elaine Wilson

SPC. Hollis Richardson glides across the hockey rink, balancing his body on just a slab of metal and two thin blades. He digs two sticks into the ice, kicking up a light mist as he rushes to propel himself toward the puck.

Veering to the right, he evades an opponent and knocks the puck to a teammate just as he collides with another player, metal slashing metal. He quickly rights himself, gains balance and glides back into the game.

Like his time on the ice, life has been a balancing act for Richardson since he was injured just over a year ago. He was patrolling in Iraq when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his right leg and shrapnel riddled his left. The medics were racing to get him on a stretcher and out of danger when he was shot in the back. He suffered massive nerve damage to his right leg and some nerve damage to his left. He also fractured his pelvis.

Richardson has spent the last year recovering at Brooke Army Medical Center, Texas, learning how to walk again and tinkering with car engines in his free time. He heard about a sled hockey team and decided to try it out, although he was a self-proclaimed nonathlete.

"I never played sports before except for some soccer as a kid," the 23-year-old said, a little out of breath after a two-hour practice. "It's been fun. I plan to keep it up; I have my own sled now and my name on my gear."

Richardson and his teammates

— a mix of wounded Soldiers and local players — make up the San Antonio Rampage sled hockey team. The sport is a modified version of ice hockey, altered to accommodate physical disabilities. Players propel themselves across the ice with sticks a third of regulation size while riding metal-frame sleds balanced on two skate blades. Aside from the equipment, the rules are about the same, as are the wrenching collisions and puck battles on the ice.

The team's coach, Lonnie Hannah, is well known in sled hockey; he was part of the U.S. sled hockey team that won the gold medal at the 2002 Paralympic Games and took bronze in 2006.

"The sport is great therapy, not just physically but mentally," said Hannah, also a former national-champion speed skater. "It gets the guys out of the hospital and into society."

Hannah speaks from experience. He was injured in a work-related accident more than 20 years ago. But rather than being bound to a wheelchair, Hannah switched from speed skating to adaptive sports. He played wheelchair tennis and basketball before he discovered a passion for sled hockey.

"In the hospital, people are there to help, to do for you," Hannah said. "But at the rink, you're carrying and putting on your equipment, doing everything for yourself. It builds resilience."

Like the coach, referees also are volunteers. They officiate at games and oversee weekly practices.

One of the referees stepped onto the rink near the end of a recent afternoon practice and sped across the ice with the ease of a lifelong skater. He moved the puck from the edges of the rink to

keep the game going, as he joked with players to keep the mood light. To the players, the referee is a familiar face on and off the rink, since he's also the commander of Fort Sam Houston.

"There's a great sense of camaraderie," said Maj. Gen. Russell Czerw, who tries to squeeze as much ice time as he can into his busy schedule. "Everyone is out here working together; the sport brings a sense of team and unity."

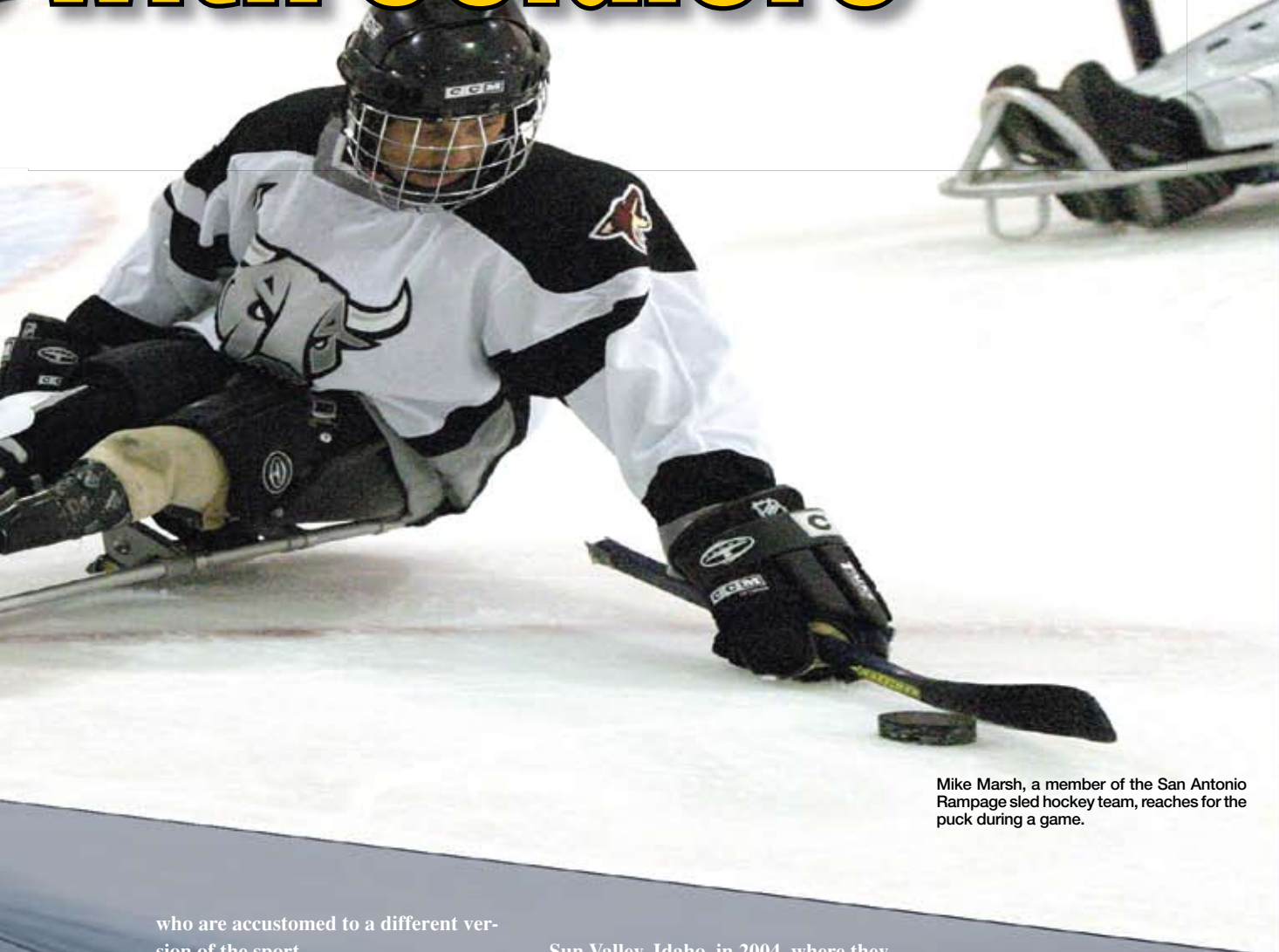
"It's also an exhausting sport. Not so much for these guys, but for the ones who play against them and aren't used to the game," he added with a smile.

Since sled hockey is not a common sport in San Antonio, teammates play each other or take on "stand-up" hockey players who take a seat for a game. But the game is tough for players



Elaine Wilson works in the Public Information Office at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

s with Soldiers



Mike Marsh, a member of the San Antonio Rampage sled hockey team, reaches for the puck during a game.

who are accustomed to a different version of the sport.

"They had no problem beating us," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason Hess, a member of the San Antonio Men of War, a local ice hockey team that lost to the Rampage 3-1. "It's a lot more challenging than it looks. It takes a lot of strength and balance to play on a sled."

The Rampage sled team coordinator, Janis Roznowski, is working to beef up opposition for the team. The creator of the nonprofit Operation Comfort, Roznowski was the driving force behind the sled hockey team. She decided to start a local team after taking a group of wounded Soldiers on a ski trip to

Sun Valley, Idaho, in 2004, where they got their first glimpse of the sport.


"The guys' eyes lit up," Roznowski said. "I thought it would be great to start a team here."


What started out as a few players knocking around a puck has grown into an organized team with national aspirations.

"The San Antonio Rampage, the local professional ice hockey team, adopted us and donated equipment, and San Antonio Parks and Recreation has been a great help," said Roznowski, who continues to help the players from San Antonio's Brooke Army Medical

Center with transportation and funding for rink time. "Our next step is to build the team up and start traveling to other cities for games so we can be competitive on a national level.

"In the meantime, the sled hockey team welcomes new players and has an added enticement for aspiring sled hockey enthusiasts.

"You go out on the ice and take out your aggression," said Sgt. Chris Leverkus, an amputee. "I love the sport. It's a great way to keep busy and experience something new." 



Members of the Golden Knights' Gold Demonstration Team leap from the team's C-27 at the beginning of a pyrotechnic airshow over Binghamton, N.Y.

Sgt. Joe Abeln

The Golden Knights **PARACHUTE**

The U.S. Army Parachute Team has promoted esprit de corps throughout the armed forces and supported the Army's recruiting goals for nearly 50 years.

Story by Cheryle Rivas

IN 1959, 13 men who were to comprise the Strategic Army Corps Sport Parachute Team reported for duty at Fort Bragg, N.C. Over the next two years the team performed so well that the Army officially activated it as the U.S. Army Parachute Team — the Defense Department's aerial-demonstration team — in 1961.

The “Golden Knights,” as they’re known today, are so called because of their many victories during the

Cheryl Rivas is a media relations officer for the U.S. Army Parachute Team.

TEAM



▲ Members of the Golden Knights' womens' four-way formation team and a male videographer pose next to the team's UV-18 before a jump.



Sgt. 1st Class J.D. Berentis

▲ As the C-27 aircraft climbs to jump altitude, Gold Team leader Sgt. 1st Class Harold Meyers checks the winds aloft and gets ground references — in this case, Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas.

years in which the then-Soviet Union dominated the international sport of skydiving.

For nearly 50 years the men and women of the U.S. Army Parachute Team — like the knights of old — have promoted esprit de corps throughout the U.S. armed forces and have supported the Army's recruiting goals through public demonstrations, USAPT officials said.

The team supports U.S. Army Accessions Command by performing parachute demonstrations in front of millions of Americans; conducting tandem jumps as part of the Army's outreach program; and competing and winning in national and international parachuting competitions.

The team's 103 men and women are divided among seven sections: two demonstration teams, a tandem team, two competition teams, an aviation section and a headquarters

section. Additionally, each team has a dedicated free-fall photographer who wears a specially designed helmet rigged with video and still cameras to record the action for publicity and training purposes.

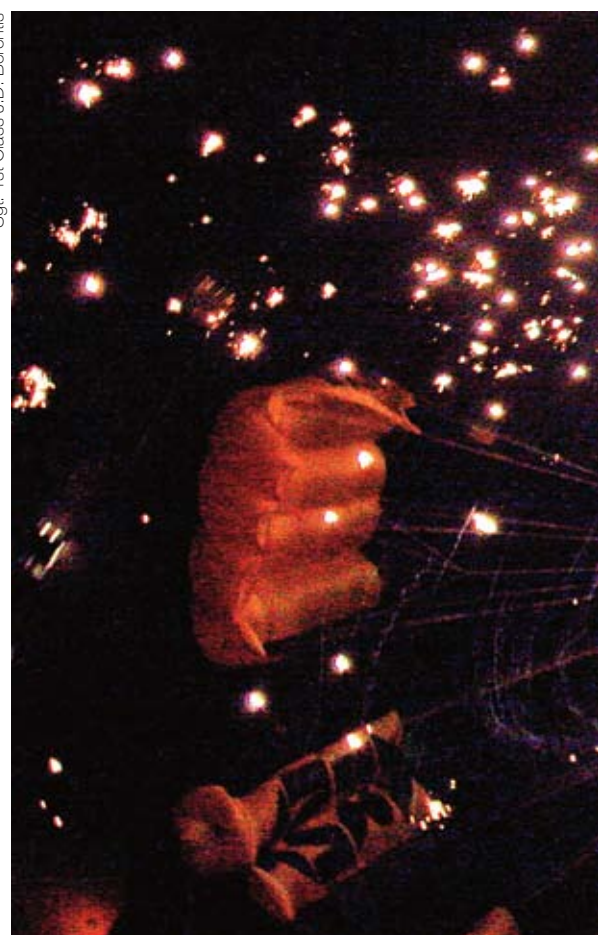
The demonstration teams travel to air shows and sporting events throughout the country, performing for an estimated 14 million spectators annually. They fly the U.S. flag as they dive toward predetermined spots on the earth, performing various precision aerial maneuvers on the way down.

The tandem team, which consists of eight Soldiers, has afforded national news-media representatives, a former U.S. president, actors and sports personalities the opportunity to jump.

These tandem opportunities provide positive exposure for the Army through the news media, and further acquaint prospective recruits

▶ Sgt. Joe Abeln and Sgt. Derek Coleman ride the downplane toward the finale of a night pyrotechnic airshow over Cape Girardeau, Mo.

Sgt. 1st Class J.D. Berentis



Becoming a

Golden Knight

Soldiers who want to become Golden Knights must first apply to attend the annual Assessment and Selection Program.

Selection is held once a year at Fort Bragg, N.C. Active-duty enlisted members from any of the services may apply.

Applicants must have a minimum of 150 free-fall parachute jumps, flawless military and civilian records, and be willing to attend the U.S. Army Airborne School.



with opportunities in the Army, while demonstrating the positive aspects of teamwork, discipline and professionalism, USAPT officials said.


The two competition units — the

Style and Accuracy Team and the Freefall Formation Team — represent the Army in parachuting competitions worldwide.

Transporting the jump teams to and from air shows, events and competitions is the job of the aviation section, known as Team Six. The team includes civilians and Soldiers who ensure the jump teams arrive safely at their destinations. Team Six includes four aircraft and some of the Army's

best aviators.

Each year the USAPT travels to Yuma, Ariz., for an extensive eight-week winter training program to perfect its parachuting skills and prepare new team members for the upcoming show season.

The men and women who wear the distinctive black and gold uniform of the USAPT represent all U.S. Soldiers and the best precision free-fall team in the world. 



Racing for Recruits

Story and Photos by Brian Murphy

FROM the practice of drafting conscripts to the science of drafting the cars of raceway competitors, the Army has come a long way in its search for future Soldiers.

In an effort to become more visible to today's youth, the Army established a racing team, consisting of NASCAR, NHRA Funny Car and stock bike racing, because speed sports appeal to 18- to 24-year-olds, the same age group Army recruiters target.

In this venue, the Army rests its 232-year reputation on highly respected driver Mark Martin, who in 2007 switched to the black and gold Army Chevrolet of the Ginn Racing Team after nearly 20 years with Roush Racing.

"This is the most important sponsor I've ever been associated with in my career, and I take this very seriously," said Martin, who has spent more than 30 years behind the wheel in the high-octane world of stock-car racing.

It was no coincidence that a veteran like Martin enlisted with the Army's racing team. The Arkansas native began his NASCAR career in 1981. Since then, he's notched up 35 NASCAR-Cup wins and has finished



▲ Sgt. 1st Class Terrence Batts, a drill sergeant with the Accession Support Brigade at Fort Knox, Ky., interacts with some of the more than 900 people who visited the Virtual Army Experience during a NASCAR race in Richmond, Va.

▶ Mark Martin earned a third-place finish at the Samsung 500 Nextel Cup race at Texas Motor Speedway on April 16, 2007.



Brian Murphy works at the U.S. Army Information Systems Command Public Affairs Office.



U.S. Army Racing

U.S. Army Racing



▲ Future Soldier Bradley Williams (left) meets Army driver Mark Martin prior to the "Chevy Rock and Roll 400" at the Richmond International Raceway in Virginia.

second in the Nextel-Cup Series point standings four times (1990, 1994, 1998 and 2002). But as impressive as Martin's NASCAR accomplishments are, it's also the way he carries himself when he's off the track that appealed to the Army.

"Winning is important, but you also have to find someone who lives up to values that represent the Army," said Col. David A. Lee, U.S. Army Accessions Command's director of strategic communications, marketing and outreach.

"Mark is a great representative for the Army. We've taken him to Arlington National Cemetery, to the Pentagon to meet some of our key leaders, and to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where he visited with Soldiers wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan," Lee said.

"I try to live my life with many of the same values that are important to the Army, and I'm proud to be the guy representing these men and women," Martin said.

While TV viewers can watch him and the Army Race Team compete week after week, race goers are able to appreciate an entirely different experience; Army recruiters, future Soldiers and even drill sergeants are on hand during a typical NASCAR

race to chat with interested parties about Army life.

One of the biggest draws each week is the Virtual Army Experience, which uses three large screens and mock military vehicles and fighting positions to give people a chance to experience a simulated combat operation from the planning phase through execution.


"The Virtual Army Experience takes the 'America's Army' video game to the next level," Lee said. "Race visitors really get a feel for what it's like to be in combat."

Martin also meets with prospective new recruits before each race.

"I couldn't think of anything that would make me prouder than representing the men and women of the Army," he said. "It's a tremendous honor and privilege to be associated with them, and I cherish the chance to give our Soldiers something to cheer about. I gladly meet with Soldiers at the races to show them respect for the sacrifices they make."

"I'd been to races before, but never quite like this," said Pvt. 2 Joshua Southworth, who attended a NASCAR race in Richmond, Va., after enlisting to be a lightweight vehicle mechanic. "I participated in the Virtual Army Experience simulator, and then I got to meet Mark Martin. It was pretty sweet — I'd never done anything like that before."

For the 2008 season, Martin, crew chief Ryan Pemberton and the Army car switched "No. 01" to Dale Earnhardt Inc.'s flagship racecar, "No. 8." When asked how much longer he plans on racing, Martin doesn't hesitate to answer.

"I'm under contract for two more years, so I'll at least be around that long," he said. 



▲ More than 900 people visit the Virtual Army Experience during a typical NASCAR weekend.



▲ Representatives from Milwaukee, Wis., host city for the 27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games, pass the torch to representatives of for the 2008 Games, to be held in Omaha, Neb.

Veterans Excel in sports and life

Story by Elaine Buehler

TWENTY-five-year-old Roberto Cruz isn't just a veteran of the war on terror — he's also a paraplegic and an athlete.

Cruz, a native of Puerto Rico, joined the Army at 21. Stationed at Fort Stewart, Ga., he deployed to Iraq in December 2004 and was shot by a sniper in Tikrit on Aug. 14, 2005.

"The bullet entered through my left arm, passed through my lung and finally lodged near my spinal cord," he said. "I remember my body felt like it had gone to sleep, but I had no feeling from my waist down. I thought a rocket-propelled grenade had blown off my legs. I remember asking my sergeant if my legs were still there. He reassured me that they were and he told me to stand up, but I couldn't."

After emergency treatment in Baghdad, Cruz was ultimately evacuated to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and now receives care at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in

Elaine Buehler works in the Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs.



◀ Army veteran Scott Winkler won a gold medal in the javelin event at the 2007 games. He also earned gold medals in shot put and discus, and earned a bronze medal in the basketball event.

Tampa, Fla. It was there that Cruz was encouraged by a physical therapist to join a local wheelchair team.

He has since attended several Paralympic development training clinics for newly injured veterans. In June 2007 he was one of more than 500 disabled veterans who convened in Milwaukee, Wis., to participate in the 27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games. The veterans, whose military service spans from World War II to the present, came from across the United States and Great Britain to compete.

Hosted each year by the VA and the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the games are a multi-event, sports-and-rehabilitation program for veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal-cord injuries, amputations or certain neurological problems. Attracting more than 500 athletes each year, the games are the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. Competitive events include swimming, table tennis, weightlifting, archery, air guns, basketball, nine-ball, softball, quad rugby, bowling, handcycling, wheelchair slalom, power soccer, a motorized wheelchair rally, and track and field. Athletes in all events compete against others with similar athletic abilities, competitive experience or age.

Because of his injuries, Cruz, who competes as a paraplegic in the open division, took on an added challenge of competing as a right-handed athlete. Previously left-handed, he competed



◀ (Left to right) James Green, Alan Lewis and Orlando Perez render honors during the playing of the national anthem at the opening ceremony of the 2007 Games.



▲ Ryan Eltzroth, an Army veteran, competed in the 2007 Games' handcycling event. He also won a gold medal in archery and a silver medal in slalom, and competed in the basketball and air gun events.

in air guns, table tennis and three field events this year.

A New Future

"After my injury, I never thought I would be able to compete in sports again," Cruz said. "I feel fortunate to still have all of my extremities. I have always been physically active and I now know there is a future – in sports and in life. I hope to come to every Wheelchair Games so I can continue to win medals and learn from others."

Cruz said his new-found confidence in sports stems from his experience at the 2006 Games, held in Anchorage, Alaska.

"Before I attended my first Wheelchair Games I felt very frustrated at times. I was down, and I didn't know what the future held," he recalled.

That first event changed Cruz's attitude, and his life, and helped him feel like a different person – stronger, happier and more confident.

"I learned from other athletes that I'm not alone and I have my whole life left to live," he said. "There are

generations of veterans who have gone through what I have, and they are still living and accomplishing great things."

A fellow veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Alan Lewis, also understands the importance of this kind of event. Lewis lost both legs after his vehicle hit a mine in Baghdad on July 16, 2003. He now lives in Milwaukee, and attended the annual Wheelchair Games for the fourth time this year.

"When you come home from Iraq, you feel a loss because you lack the camaraderie you once felt with your company," he said. "When I'm at these events, even though these men and women are not necessarily the ones I fought with, I still feel that sense of camaraderie among veterans who can relate to my situation. I love to hang out with them."

Lewis, the father of two girls, was excited to have the 2007 Games hosted

in his hometown, which allowed his family to see him compete. He won a silver medal in weightlifting and a bronze medal in the air gun event.

Scott Winkler, a paraplegic since being injured in Iraq in 2003, has also learned that quality of life does not end after injury. Since becoming involved in wheelchair sports, Winkler has excelled at competition and recently broke two national records in shot-put and discus. He was also one of more than 20 veterans training for the Paralympic Games in Beijing, China.

Nearly half the veterans who competed in the 2007 National Veterans Wheelchair Games were from the Army, with 24 of the participants having served combat duty in Iraq or World War II. Other participants saw combat in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Somalia, Bosnia, Lebanon, Panama and the Gulf War. 🇺🇸

For more information about the National Veterans Wheelchair Games visit
www.wheelchairgames.va.gov

John Blue goes for a lay-up during the wheel-chair basketball clinic conducted during the USOC Paralympic Military Sports Camp.



History of the PARALYMPICS

Story by Elaine Buehler

BECAUSE World War II left so many Soldiers with serious injuries, in 1948 Sir Ludwig Guttmann organized a sports competition in Stoke Mandeville, England, to get British war veterans with spinal cord injuries moving again. Four years later, competitors from the Netherlands joined the games and an international movement was born.

Olympic-style games for athletes with disabilities, now called Paralympics, were organized for the first time in Rome in 1960. The first Paralympic Winter Games took place in Sweden in 1976.

Today, the Paralympics are elite sports events for athletes from six disability groups. They emphasize, however, the participants' athletic achievements rather than their disabilities.

The sports event has grown dramatically since its early days. In 1960 some 400 athletes from 23 countries participated in the Summer Paralympic Games, in 2004 some 3,806 athletes from 136 countries competed.

Elaine Buehler works for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Athletes at the Summer Paralympic Games compete in archery, bocce ball, bowling, cycling, equestrian events, football, goal ball, judo, power lifting, rowing, sailing, shooting, swimming, table tennis and volleyball. There are also several wheelchair sports, including basketball, dance sport, fencing, rugby and tennis. Winter Games' participants compete in alpine skiing, ice sledge hockey, Nordic skiing and wheelchair curling.

John Register, associate director of outreach and development for the U.S. Olympic Committee's Paralympic division, played a key role in brokering the agreement between the USOC and the Department of Veterans Affairs, to give injured veterans more exposure to the Paralympic program.

"World War II veterans began this effort, and Iraq veterans will continue to foster its growth," Register said. "The U.S. Paralympics is committed


to ensuring all of our disabled veterans know about these games and how to stay active through sports."

The Paralympic Games have always been held in the same year as the Olympic Games. Since the Seoul

1988 Paralympic Games and the Albertville 1992 Winter Paralympic Games, they have also taken place at the same venues as the Olympics. Since the Salt Lake 2002 Games, one organizing committee is responsible for hosting both the Olympic and the Paralympic Games. Athletes participating in the two respective Olympics live in the same Olympic Village

The Paralympics are elite sports events for athletes from six disability groups. They emphasize, however, the participants' athletic achievements rather than their disabilities.

and enjoy the same catering services, medical care and facilities. Ticketing, technology and transport systems for the Olympic Games are seamlessly extended to the Paralympians.

Beijing, China, will host the 2008 Paralympic Games, and the 2010 Winter Paralympics will be held in Vancouver, Canada. 

Visit www.paralympic.org for more information

Legal Forum

Protecting Yourself Against IDENTITY THEFT

IDENTITY theft is the intentional misuse of another's personal information for profit. Your personal data—especially your Social Security number, your bank account or credit card number, and your telephone calling card number—may allow someone to personally profit at your expense. While identity theft is often referred to as a “victimless crime,” more than 8.9 million people were affected by identity theft in 2006.

Its total cost to the United States in 2006 was more than \$56 billion, with the average identity-theft case costing individuals \$6,383 and more than 40 total hours of effort to resolve. While these facts may be daunting and frightening, there are more uplifting statistics as well – such as the fact that 63 percent of potential identity theft is under the consumer's control, meaning that in many cases identity theft can be prevented.

Identity theft may occur in a number of different ways. A thief may acquire information that will allow the use of your credit cards, ATM cards and bank accounts or other means to steal money directly from you. A thief may also acquire information about you, then use that information to open new bank accounts or obtain credit cards, drivers' licenses, passports or birth certificates.

While the Internet is the source of about 10 percent of stolen identity information, identity thieves find the information they need in a variety of locations. Twenty percent of all identity

theft results from a lost or stolen wallet, and 47 percent is committed by someone the victim knows. Service members and their families may be especially vulnerable to identity theft because of the wide use of their Social Security numbers and the number of times they change addresses.



CPT Lauren Exnicios is assigned to the Legal Assistance Office at Fort Belvoir, Va.

Protecting Your Identity

There are many easy ways to protect yourself against identity theft, to detect it quickly if it does occur, and to resolve it in a timely manner if you've been a victim.

Protecting against unauthorized and unnecessary access to your personal information is the best way to prevent identity theft.



- Protect your Social Security number. Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet.
- Keep sensitive items — such as check books, powers of attorney and credit-card statements — locked away.
- Shred documents that contain personal information before throwing them away.
- Instead of receiving paper statements or bills, use the on-line systems. If you do receive paper statements, be sure to retrieve them quickly from your mailbox or get a locked post office box.
- If you are moving, be sure to quickly notify banks and credit-card companies of your new address so statements are not sitting in your old mailbox.
- Stop pre-approved credit offers by calling 888-5OPTOUT.
- If your wallet is lost or stolen, contact all banks and credit card companies as soon as possible to report the loss. File a police report so that there is a record of the loss. This record may later assist you in resolving any issues that arise from someone misusing your information.
- Don't fall victim to "phishing" scams. Those seeking personal information may try to use e-mail or telephone calls to acquire information from you. If you receive an e-mail from a bank, store or government agency asking you to verify your personal information online, in writing or through the Internet, do not reply. You should contact the bank or organization that claims to be contacting you to find out if the request is legitimate. "Phishers" have become very sophisticated and often send e-mails that use the same logo and colors as your bank. Be sure to confirm any requests so your information does not end up in the wrong hands.
- Keep track of your credit and bank accounts. Check your credit reports once a year. By monitoring your credit reports, you will be able to quickly spot unauthorized activity and make it easier to resolve the problem. Free credit reports are available at www.annualcreditreport.com. Review your bank, credit card and other statements weekly. Discovering unauthorized activity and quickly contacting the bank or credit-card company will help to mitigate the damage that identity theft can cause.

If You're a Victim

If you find yourself victim of identity theft, it is important to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. Call the financial institution or government agency involved immediately to alert them to the fraud. Some organizations will start an investigation on their own, while others will require more information from you. You may fill out an identity theft affidavit at the Federal Trade Commission Web site — www.ftc.gov. Be sure to notify the credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and TransUnion) and have a fraud alert placed on your credit report. This may prevent further fraud from occurring and let creditors know that you

have experienced unauthorized activity.

Being aware of your personal information, how and where its stored and how it may be used will help to prevent identity theft. Take the Identity Safety Quiz at www.idsafety.net to see how safe your personal information is and to receive some personalized tips on how you can better protect yourself.

Remember to protect your information, detect any unauthorized activity and resolve any problems quickly. A small amount of protection may save you and your family thousands of dollars and many hours of frustration.

Know the Law



Soldiers Aid Cyclone Victims

A MEDICAL team from U.S. Army Pacific Command provided humanitarian aid and medical assistance to millions of people affected by Cyclone Sidr.

The category-4 cyclone struck Bangladesh in mid-November with winds in excess of 150 miles per hour, killing more than 3,500 people and leaving millions without homes and safe drinking water.

The USARPAC medical team worked with their Bangladeshi counterparts — as well as with members of the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps — to ensure civilians received the basic supplies needed to sustain life.

The USARPAC team was already in Bangladesh,

participating in Exercise Tendon Bengal. The exercise involved medical personnel from the U.S. and Bangladeshi armies, along with civilian specialists. The participants trained on natural-disaster relief and humanitarian assistance during the exercise.

“It was in the back of my mind the whole time what was going on, to be brought into the reality of what occurred,” said Col. Thomas Bailey, officer in charge of Tendon Bengal 2007. “It was coincidence that we came to face this situation, and we were mentally ready. I hope we can utilize the lessons we learned.” — *USARPAC Public Affairs Office*



Soldiers and other military personnel assigned to an Army medical team from Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii, load cases of water bottles onto a Marine Corps CH-53E Sea Stallion for transport to areas devastated by Cyclone Sidr.



"America's Army: True Soldiers" hit the streets in November as an Xbox game. Now the game's creators are hoping to stir up excitement in the PC gaming world.

"America's Army" Now on Xbox, PCs

WHEN the Xbox 360 version of "America's Army: True Soldiers" hit the streets in mid-November, recruiters across the country held launch events at local stores. Now the game's creators are hoping to stir up excitement in the PC gaming world.

"Both the PC and Xbox 360 versions allow us to foster a large America's Army community where players can use teamwork and Army values to achieve success in their gameplay missions," said Maj. Mike Marty, operations officer for the America's Army Project. "These online communities extend beyond mere gameplay as players join in teams and use online forums to discuss their strategies, and even the military in general."

The PC version was demonstrated on three laptops at the 2007 Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education

Conference in Orlando, Fla., in late November. "Soldier response has been tremendous," Marty said. "They are very impressed with how authentic the game is, from the way the weapons work and sound to the realistic training missions."

New features include a Blue Force Tracker that improves recognition of targets and players' "battlefield awareness." Additional intelligence can now be gathered by the Raven unmanned aerial vehicle and displayed on the portable Blue Force Tracker PDA. Teammates can also share intel via in-game voice-over chat.

The America's Army team is constantly developing updates for the game, Marty said, adding that development has begun on the entirely new America's Army 3.0.

The next update to the America's Army: Special Forces (Overmatch) game will be released in the coming months.

Hotline Helping Wounded Warriors and Families

THE Army's Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline has received and answered more than 8,000 calls from Soldiers, veterans, families and concerned citizens, and about 85 percent of callers have received favorable responses, said Col. Bob Clark, the hotline's deputy director.

The hotline receives inquiries, requests for information and issue calls. Issue-related calls are usually the more complicated. For example, a Soldier doesn't have a vehicle and can't get to Walter Reed. In this case, Clark said, he would call the medical community and tell them the Soldier needs transportation.

The majority of calls are about medical issues, he said, but the hotline also receives calls about personnel, legal, financial and other issues.

The hotline can be reached at (800) 984-9523, or via the Defense Switched Network at (312) 328-0002, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. — *Elizabeth M. Lorge, ARNEWS*

Version 3.0 is slated for release in late 2008.

The PC game can be found at www.americasarmy.com and is also available through recruiters and at Army events. The console game is available at all major retailers. — *Edric Thompson*



Army Gets More Stryker NBC Recon Vehicles

THE Army has authorization to purchase 95 more Stryker nuclear, biological and chemical reconnaissance vehicles, in addition to 10 already in Iraq and several others used for testing and training.

"The Stryker NBCRV represents a powerful tool for commanders to protect U.S. interests from weapons of mass destruction," said Brig. Gen. Thomas W. Spoehr, chief of the U.S. Army Chemical Corps. "And this month, after careful consideration, the Department of Defense gave the authorization for 95 more Stryker NBCRVs."

For now, the NBCRV is in low-rate initial production, but the Army eventually hopes to have as many as 355 of the vehicles.

The Stryker NBCRV is an NBC testing lab on wheels. It is intended to replace the Fox NBC reconnaissance system and demonstrates improvement in several key areas over the Fox. It also provides improved

communication to ground commanders, Spoehr said.

"The Stryker NBCRV represents a vast increase in capability over the Fox, in terms of biological sensing, accuracy, speed, lethality, survivability and digital communications — it is a true leap ahead," he said.

The NBCRV features a suite of nuclear, chemical and biological sensors that enable it to test for a wide range of contaminants that could prove hazardous for ground troops.

One such feature is a set of two tiny rubber wheels on robotic arms that roll along the ground behind the vehicle.

"While we are rolling down the route, the wheels come up to the probe, then it gets vaporized and put into a sensor," said Spc. Christopher A. Case an NBCRV crew member. "So instead of having to stop each time, we can keep rolling until we get a hit."

— *C. Todd Lopez, Army News Service*



Army Fields New Black Hawk

THE Army began fielding the latest version of its Black Hawk helicopter in December with delivery of UH-60Ms to the 101st Airborne Division's 159th Combat Aviation Brigade.

The UH-60M will gradually replace the 25-year-old L model and will become the Army's standard medium-lift helicopter for assault, medical-evacuation and cargo missions, as well as for command and control, aerial sustainment, and search and rescue. The UH-60M will also be looked at as a follow-on helicopter for special-operations units, said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Gene McNeill, a test pilot and UH-60M instructor at Sikorsky.

"What I like about this aircraft is the extreme precise accuracy of navigation using imbedded GPS and INS technologies," McNeill said. "That translates to increased situational awareness on the battlefield at all times.

"With a digital moving map you know exactly where you are with





The Army's latest Black Hawk, the UH-60M, in silhouette, lands at the Pentagon's helicopter pad. Photo by J.D. Leipold

relationship to the earth. It enables you to execute your mission a lot better, because you don't have to do manual calculations — the aircraft's digital suite makes everything faster," he said.

UH-60M pilots will also be able to download all flight information from an office computer to a two-gigabyte card, which is then used to download to the Black Hawk's computer system.

"What that means is I can walk out to my aircraft with a flight plan and my entire mission loaded onto the card — all my intelligence data, my frequencies, my waypoints, then dump them into my aircraft and load it into the flight management system," McNeill said.

The new Black Hawk also has a "threat intervisibility" system that allows terrain data and known enemy positions to be plotted on a moving map display in the cockpit. This allows the pilot to keep the aircraft masked by terrain and out of the range of enemy fire.

— J.D. Leipold, ARNEWS

Schoomaker Becomes Surgeon General

LT. Gen. Eric B. Schoomaker became the 42nd surgeon general of the Army in December, and then assumed command of the U.S. Army Medical Command in a separate ceremony in San Antonio, Texas.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. said the former Walter Reed commander has improved the image of Army medicine.

"Gen. Schoomaker has been not only a participant, but a leader, in helping the Army correct the perception that we don't care about our wounded Soldiers," Casey said. "I rode up on a bus with a group of wounded Soldiers to the Army-Navy game, and everyone on that bus said they had seen significant improvements in what is going on at Walter Reed over the time that he's been there. General Schoomaker is a man of competent clarity and experience, but most importantly, leadership."

Schoomaker told attendees of the ceremony, including his brother, former Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Peter J. Shoomaker (Ret.), that he was honored to have been chosen to become surgeon general.

"I am deeply humbled and profoundly grateful to be honored with the privilege to serve as your surgeon general, and to serve as your advocate for the health and the wellbeing of our Soldiers and their Families," he said.

— C. Todd Lopez, ARNEWS

Soldiers Train in India

More than 120 Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division from Fort Wainwright, Alaska, recently trained in the foothills of the Himalayas with their Indian counterparts during Exercise Yudh Abhyas.

Soldiers from Company C, 3rd Battalion, 21st Inf. Regiment, spent about a week training in a cantonment area before conducting a field-training exercise with the 5th Ghurkha Rifles (Frontier Force). The exercise included such low-intensity, counter-insurgency actions as raids, civic-assistance missions and quick-reaction team operations.

The training took place at an altitude of more than 6,500 feet and was demanding for the American troops.

"The first few days of running

up the slopes winded us," said Staff Sgt. Joseph Gobeil, a Stryker mobile gun system vehicle commander.

One of the ways the Soldiers adjusted to the altitude was by playing soccer, basketball, volleyball and handball with the Indian troops.

In addition to standard military training and exercise, the Americans were exposed to yoga by participating in morning sessions with the Ghurkhas — led by master yoga instructors.

"Limberness and range of motion is something we may not always stress, and yoga is a time-proven method to enhance these health qualities," said physician assistant Capt. Bob Hilleman.

— Sgt. Matthew MacRoberts, 20th Public Affairs Detachment

Go Army, Beat Navy!

Story by Brian Murphy



SOME might believe that the Super Bowl, with its estimated 80- to 90-million viewers, is the biggest sporting event of the year, said Head Coach Stan Brock of the Army Black Knights. And while the National Football League's championship game is the most-watched program on television annually, Brock believes the rivalry between players at the Army-Navy game is greater than that of Super Bowl competitors.

"The emotional charge of the Army-Navy game is 10 times more powerful than that of the Super Bowl," added Brock, who speaks from first-hand experience; he was a member of the San Diego Chargers team that lost to the San Francisco 49ers, 49-26, in Super Bowl XXIX.

"It's not even close to the same game or the same atmosphere," he continued. "If you go to the Super Bowl and there are 70,000 seats there, the majority of those seats are taken up by corporate America — people who might not care that much about the teams. You go to the Army-Navy game and there are 70,000 people who have a very strong opinion as to who they want to win. The emotion and energy at an Army-Navy game far exceeds any Super Bowl."

While neither team is considered a football powerhouse able to compete for a national championship, millions of TV viewers worldwide tune in each year as the Army Black Knights from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., and the Navy Midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy from Annapolis, Md., do battle. The rivalry has withstood the test of time. Coming into their 108th meeting in December 2007, Navy led the all-time series by a narrow 51-49-7 margin.

Although Brock has only been the head coach for a short time, he's heard one request repeatedly from Soldiers and alumni. "If Army only wins one game this season, please just beat Navy."

"I hear it over and over again," he said. "But I wouldn't be happy, the players wouldn't be happy and the alumni wouldn't be happy if that were the case. We have to win more than one game." But the collective point made by Army supporters is well taken. The Army-Navy game is a very important game for a lot of reasons, notably it decides who has the bragging rights for the rest of the year.

Brian Murphy works at the U.S. Army Information Systems Command Public Affairs Office.



▲ Navy led the 108-year-old rivalry by a narrow 51-49-7 margin going into the most recent game, which Army lost 38-3.

"I understand that," Brock said, "but I'd rather be 11-1 than 1-11."

Before the 2007 season started, Brock was named the 35th head coach at West Point. After spending three years as the offensive line coach on former Army Coach Bobby Ross' staff, the 16-year NFL veteran was more than ready to step up to the challenge.

"This job means the world to me," he said. "I consider it a privilege to be the academy's head coach, and I understand my responsibilities, not only to our football players, but to the academy and the entire Army."

Brock doesn't buy into the notion that his lengthy playing career automatically earns him carte blanche with his players or the Army teams' fans.

"You earn respect every day," he said. "I don't care if you're the CEO of a company or a football coach — you earn what you get. You can't fool people. A resume is one thing, but you still have to go out and produce."

As for his expectations each season, they remain the same.

"Our goals each year are to be bowl eligible, which translates to winning the bulk of our games, and to win the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy by beating the Air Force and Navy," Brock said.

Any time Army beats Navy it's a cause for celebration at West Point, so, when asked at press time if he could guarantee victory over Navy in what was then the upcoming December game, Brock said, "No, I won't do that. But if we play to the best of our abilities then I'm willing to let the chips fall where they may." 🍀



Chaplain School Named for Vietnam Hero

Fort Jackson, S.C.

THE building housing the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School here was renamed Watters Hall during a Nov. 20 ceremony honoring a chaplain killed 40 years ago in Vietnam.

Maj. Charles Watters was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for retrieving four wounded Soldiers from harm's way while under enemy fire and administering aid to other wounded Soldiers when he was killed.

"Few of us will ever be called upon to make choices like those Charles Watters made that day in November 1967, but each of us can and should be inspired by his example to demonstrate the same degree of selflessness as we provide spiritual leadership for the Army family," wrote Maj. Gen. Douglas Carver, the Army's chief of chaplains, in a letter read during the ceremony.

Watters was assigned to Company A, 173rd Support Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade. He died near Dak To on Nov. 19, 1967. The chaplain was with one of the companies when it engaged a heavily armed enemy battalion.

Unarmed and completely exposed, with "complete disregard for his own safety," according to his award citation, Watters moved among and in front of the advancing



Chaplain (Col.) Clarke McGriff, commandant of the Army Chaplain Center and School, reads remarks from Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Douglas Carver, Army chief of chaplains, regarding the heroic efforts of Chaplain (Maj.) Charles Watters during the Vietnam War. The school has been dedicated in Watters' memory as Watters Hall.

— Photo by Chris Rasmussen

troops to give aid and to assist in the evacuation of wounded Soldiers.

After aiding in several evacuations, he began assisting the medics, giving spiritual and mental strength and serving food and water. Watters was killed moments later by a bomb that was mistakenly dropped on the area by U.S. aircraft.

— Chris Rasmussen

Guard Rescues Hundreds in Oregon Flooding

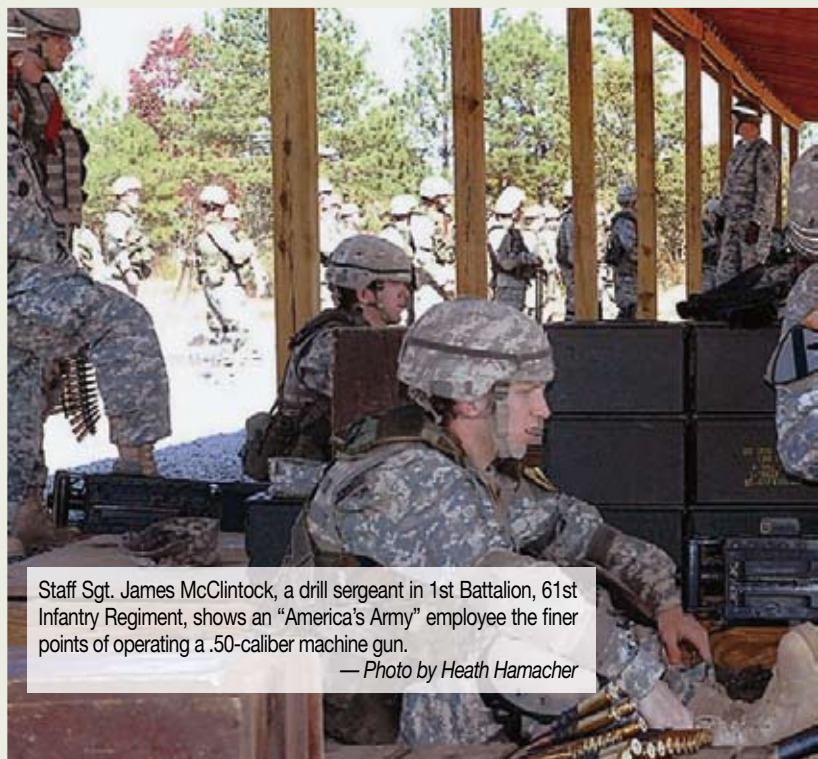
IN early December the Oregon National Guard assisted in the rescue of 200 to 400 residents of the coastal town of Vernonia, Ore. Heavy rains had caused extensive flooding throughout the state.

Due to extreme weather conditions and obstacles on the ground, rescue by air was too risky, officials said. An Air Guard unit, with help from the Army Guard's 141st Support Battalion, arrived in Vernonia Dec. 3 and quickly deployed four Zodiac boats. Making their way through the flooded streets and residences of Vernonia, the Guard members brought welcome relief.

The Oregon Guard continued to support response and recovery efforts in the wake of severe winter storms that struck the Pacific Northwest, officials said. Areas hardest hit by the storm asked for generators, water and assistance with getting supplies. The Guard worked closely with state agencies and such private organizations as the Red Cross, officials said, to move equipment and supplies to where they were needed most.

Both Oregon governor Ted Kulongoski and Brig. Gen. Mike Caldwell, the Oregon Guard's deputy director for state affairs, lauded local and state agencies, including the Oregon National Guard, for their quick response to flooding in the state.

— National Guard Bureau Public Affairs Office



Staff Sgt. James McClintock, a drill sergeant in 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment, shows an "America's Army" employee the finer points of operating a .50-caliber machine gun.

— Photo by Heath Hamacher

Dakota Soldiers Train in Mississippi Camp Shelby, Miss.

EVERY day of training at Camp Shelby, Miss., brought new tasks and challenges for South Dakota National Guard Soldiers preparing for a December deployment to Iraq.

Arriving at Camp Shelby in late October, the Soldiers of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, spent 10 days training and living in the field.

Most of the training focused on theater-specific situations as the unit prepared for its security-force mission, which will include escorting convoys. Soldiers also learned to look for improvised explosive devices, as well as for the recognizable signs of such explosives placed along the roads.

During drivers training, Soldiers from the Salem and Sioux Falls based unit got their first chance to drive the updated version of the up-armored Humvee. Soldiers also learned to drive the vehicle while wearing

Staff Sgt. Michael Schwans performs a choke hold on Spc. Larry Sandle for Soldiers from Battery B at Camp Shelby, Miss.

— Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Ben Lamp



night-vision goggles.

"The drivers' training was good, but it was really difficult to get comfortable driving with those goggles on," said Spc. Dusty Mitchell.

Soldiers were also taught how to fight unarmed

as they spent a day learning hand-to-hand combative moves. Everyone learned offensive and defensive techniques and got a chance to practice them on each other in large sawdust pits.

— Spc. Charles Butler



Game Developers Take Basic Training Fort Jackson

THE developers of the "America's Army" video game series and other civilian contractors recently spent four days at Fort Jackson, Miss., learning what it takes to transition from civilian to Soldier.

The contractors went through a mini-Basic Combat Training course, which included physical training, drill and ceremony, and weapons firing.

What the game developers experienced during their stay at Fort Jackson should help make the next version of "America's Army" the most realistic version yet, said John Carlisle, account director at Ignited Marketing and a former Army officer.

"This will help keep this the most authentic Army game out there," Carlisle said. "It's good to get the developers behind a machine gun, because usually those guys are the ones rendering it in three dimensions

and putting it into the game. You want them to understand the action of the weapon."

While the mini-BCT course should bring even more realism to the game, Carlisle said he believes those attending will learn more than just the technical aspects of the Army.

"They'll understand that being a Soldier isn't just about shooting, it's about camaraderie and teamwork, about being a unit and sharing a common experience," he said. "That's the real strength of the Army."

The original version of "America's Army" launched in 2002. It's been downloaded more than 40 million times, making it one of the most popular PC video games of all time. Since its release, subsequent PC versions and versions for Xbox and mobile phones have also been developed.

— Heath Hamacher, Fort Jackson Leader



Hospital Gets Newest Equipment

West Point, N.Y.

ONE of the two operating rooms at the U.S. Military Academy's Keller Army Community Hospital has gone state-of-the-art with the addition of an all-in-one equipment management and visualization system.

The NuBOOM system is designed to be a permanently installed fixture in operating rooms that incorporate medical video equipment. The system features two nine-foot booms with 35-inch extension arms for precise, six-axis monitor positioning, and a touch-panel control system to easily select the video source for each monitor.

Surgery teams at KACH can now enter the operating room and find all the equipment they need already in place, said Col. Thomas M. DeBerardino, director of the John A. Feagin Jr. Sports Medicine Fellowship and head team physician for all Army athletics at West Point.

"The system is designed to make the operating

area more ergonomically efficient, and helps ensure rapid turnover time between cases because there's less equipment moving in and out of the operating room," DeBerardino said. "Additionally, with these articulating arms that have high-definition TV monitor screens, we can view everything right in front of us — it's equivalent to a pilot's heads up display."

DeBerardino said the NuBOOM system was a good fit for the older infrastructure at KACH, because it bolts to the floor. Being an older hospital, the operating rooms there could not have been easily fitted with devices similar to the NuBOOM that must hang from the ceiling.

Keller is the first hospital in the Army to use the NuBOOM system, but about 50 more will get it in the next year or so. It is also expected that KACH's second operating room will be equipped with the NuBOOM by mid-2008.

— Eric S. Bartelt, USMA PAO



Germany WTU Draws Praise

Wiesbaden, Germany

THE new Warrior Transition Unit at Wiesbaden, Germany, is getting good reviews from its first customer.

Spc. Joseph Gooch didn't know what to expect as the first injured Soldier reporting to the new WTU. In the past, he'd been less than impressed with services the military had provided him and his family. But when he received orders to report to the U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden WTU, he was surprised by the service he received.

"I've never been treated this nicely," Gooch said. "Everyone here was willing to bring services and things I needed to me and my family. They were worried that it wasn't adequate, but everything has been spectacular."

WTUs were activated in Army communities to ensure continuous care for injured troops and to ease their transition back into the military or civilian community.

Though members of the Gooch family are the first beneficiaries of the services of the Wiesbaden WTU, officials there say they are confident the program is right on track.

— Chrystal Smith, USAREUR PAO

WSMR Gets New Spacecraft Pad

White Sands Missile Range, N.M.

NASA took a step toward sending a new generation of explorers to the moon with the Nov. 14 groundbreaking of a new test launch pad at the Army's White Sands Missile Range, N.M.

Representatives from the Army and NASA joined community representatives at the Launch Complex-32 site, where the Orion Abort Flight Test Launch Complex will be built.

The complex will host a series of tests to help ensure the safety of astronauts aboard the Orion spacecraft, NASA's crew exploration vehicle. The first of five unmanned tests is scheduled for Sept. 23, 2008.

The flights from White Sands will focus on the ability of Orion's launch-abort system to pull the crew safely away from the vehicle in the event of a problem on the pad or during the climb into orbit.

Col. Bruce Lewis, commander of White Sands Test Center, welcomed guests to the range.

"As we continue our support for NASA, we are pleased to offer White Sands' unique assets of extensive land mass, restricted air space, tremendous data collection capabilities and extremely talented workforce to the Orion flight test program," he said.

Orion is part of the Constellation Program, which is intended to send human explorers back to the moon and then onward to Mars and other destinations in the solar system. — Miriam U. Rodriguez, WSMR PAO

1st SBCT Soldier Awarded DSC

Fort Wainwright, Alaska

A Soldier who saved the life of his platoon leader in Iraq was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross Dec. 12 at Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

Sgt. Gregory Williams — a squad leader in the 25th Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team — received the Army's second-highest award for valor from Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr.

During a mounted night patrol Oct. 30, 2006, in Baghdad's Huriyah neighborhood, Williams' Stryker

was struck by shaped charges that sent a stream of molten fire through the vehicle.

"It was like someone took a can opener and peeled the Stryker open," Williams said.

As the Stryker and its occupants caught fire, enemy forces unleashed an barrage of rocket-propelled grenades and AK-47 rounds. While the vehicle was still in motion, the Soldiers dismounted via the back ramp, found cover and returned fire.

Williams was unconscious for a few seconds after

the blast, but recovered and put the flames out on himself and other Soldiers around him before grabbing a first aid bag with which to treat his comrades.

Although injured himself, Williams pulled his lieutenant from the smoldering Stryker, provided suppressive fire with a .50-caliber weapon and helped give first aid to other Soldiers burned by the IED blast.

"When I want to talk about the quality of the force, I talk about Sgt. Williams," said Casey. "Soldiers like Sgt. Williams are the heart and soul of the Army."

— Spc. Vincent Fusco



The \$12 million site at NTC will ultimately include nearly 500 buildings.



NTC Opens New Urban Training Site

Fort Irwin, Calif.

SOLDIERS will soon begin training on what National Training Center officials say will one day be the largest military operations in urban terrain site in the Army.

Fort Irwin, Calif., teamed with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Los Angeles District and the USACE Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville, Ala., to design and build the MOUT site. In October 2007 — just eight months from the start of construction — phase one was completed and turned over to the installation. The streets were paved just before Thanksgiving.

The \$12 million site encompasses 41 main buildings, including a government complex and a consulate, and another 24 smaller structures such as guard towers. But the facility is not yet complete, said Tim Reischl, Fort Irwin's deputy operations officer.

"When finished, there will be some 232 buildings," Reischl said. "Partnerships with the reserve component and local initiatives will add another couple hundred buildings. When all four phases are complete, we will have nearly 500 buildings. We wanted a very large site to train an Army brigade."

Ten brigades a year go through the National Training Center.

The MOUT is the first urban training facility at the NTC. Prior to its development, the NTC had 10 villages made up of military shipping containers and sheds. — NTC PAO

NASA and industry officials join White Sands Test Center commander Col. Bruce Lewis in the groundbreaking for the Orion Abort Flight Test Launch Complex.

— Photo by Miriam U. Rodriguez

Story and Photo by Spc. Terry Axson and Capt. Geoff Legler

Football, Family and Unit Pride

OKLAHOMANS who watched the U.S. Military Academy's football team play during the 2007 season may have noticed a familiar patch on Cadet Brandon Thompson's jersey. Early last summer his father, Lt. Col. Michael Thompson of the Oklahoma Army National Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade, contacted West Point Director of Football Operations Lt. Col. Bill Lynch to see if Brandon could wear the 45th's gold and red "Thunderbird" patch.

Spc. Terry Axson and Capt. Geoff Legler are assigned to the 45th Infantry Brigade Public Affairs Office.

The elder Thompson and Brandon's brother, Jared, are both scheduled to deploy to Iraq with the 45th Inf. Bde. in 2008.

Unit patches are normally assigned to specific jersey numbers and Brandon, who wears number 95, had worn the 2nd Infantry Division patch for three years. The request was granted, and Brandon was the first player to wear a National Guard patch during a game, Lynch said.

Brig. Gen. Myles Deering, 45th Inf. Bde. commander, said his Soldiers should be proud to see the patch being represented in such a way.

"I see this as a tremendous display of respect to Brandon's father and brother, as well as demonstrating the unity of our Army. I appreciate very much the academy's accommodation of Brandon's request to wear the Thunderbird patch on his uniform," Deering said. "The Thompsons are a great family, and I know how much it means to them. The Soldiers of the 45th IBCT are proud of the Thunderbird, and this only brings greater honor to its legacy."

Brandon, a senior defensive end and business-management major, began the season on the watch list for The Rotary Lombardi Award, given to the best interior lineman in college football. Although injuries limited his playing time the

"With all that's going on in the world, I want to serve while I still can."

previous season, Brandon was a key player for the Black Knights in 2007.

"He's done everything we have asked him to do," Army Head Coach Stan Brock said.

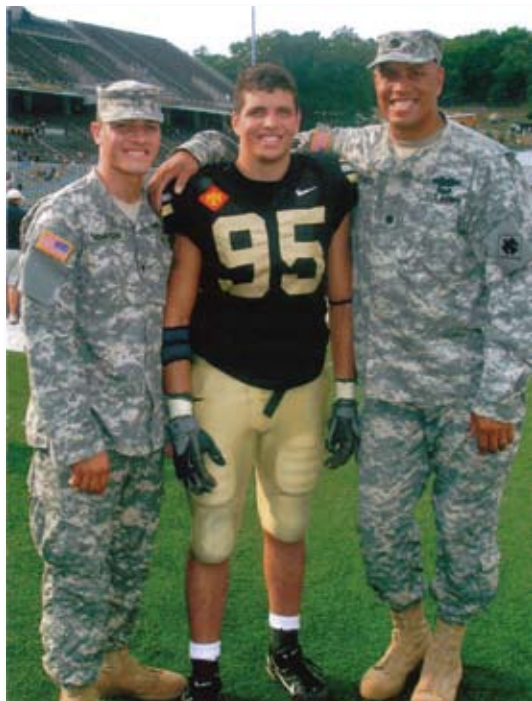
Brock said Brandon and other players at West Point have a different standard than most college athletes.

"A football player who comes to West Point to play ball knows what he's getting into, being a cadet in the morning and a football player in the afternoon," Brock said. "We are very fortunate to have Brandon as a cadet here; he's a fabulous football player and an even better person."

Brandon will soon be facing a tough choice in deciding what field he wants to pursue once he graduates. He said he's narrowed his choices to field artillery and air defense.

While the Thompson family is diverse in its endeavors, Lt. Col. Thompson said the best thing is seeing his boys accomplish what they set out to do.

"I couldn't be more proud of them," he said. "As a father, it makes you feel good to know that your children are doing something productive. Seeing them serving their country the way they do puts a smile on my face."



A family of Soldiers: (from left) Spc. Jared Thompson, 1st Battalion, 160th Field Artillery; Cadet Brandon Thompson, U.S. Military Academy; Lt. Col. Mike Thompson, HQs. Company, 45th Infantry Brigade.



Sports Safety

Playing sports can be fun, but also dangerous.
Prevent injuries by managing risks:

- Wearing the right shoes, gear and equipment
- Drinking lots of water
- Warming up and stretching
- Evaluate playing fields



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